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ABSTRACT

The manual delineates the roles of the educator in child abuse and neglect identification, treatment, and prevention. Chapter I addresses the nature, extent, causes, and effects of child abuse and neglect. Chapter II explains why educators should be involved with discussion of legal and ethical issues relating to the problem. A third chapter points out indicators of physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment. Federal, state, and local policies and procedures regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect cases are outlined in Chapter IV. Chapter V describes what the schools can offer in terms of support for the child, the parent, and the family: and Chapter VI considers school based programs, school community programs, and individual action geared to prevention. Appended are standards applicable to the manual on the educator's role and an outline of a model child abuse and neglect policy for schools. (SBH)

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THE EDUCATOR'S ROLE

IN THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

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THE EDUCATOR'S ROLE

IN THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Diane D. Broadhurst

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PREFACE

This manual delineates the many roles of the educator in child abuse and neglect (or "child maltreatment") identification, treatment, and prevention. It is designed primarily for use by educators, including teachers, administrators, pupil services staff and school nurses at the the pre-school, primary and secondary levels; by staff of local and state education agencies; by Board of Education members, whether elected or appointed; and by school-affiliated groups and professional organizations.

This manual may also be used by other professionals dealing with child abuse and neglect and by concerned citizens wanting to better understand the educator's potential role in identifying, preventing and treating child abuse and neglect.

The Educator's Role in the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect is one in a series of manuals based on the *Federal Standards for Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Treatment Programs and Projects.** (A list of the Standards related to the education system will be found in Apprendix A.) This manual focuses on the following:

- Why educators should be concerned about child abuse and neglect
- How to recognize child abuse and neglect in a classroom setting
- Steps to take when reporting suspected child abuse and neglect
- Intervention strategies for schools
- Prevention of child abuse and neglect as a function of both the school and the individual educator.

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*Other manuals in this series address related topics such as the role of other professionals in preventing and treating child abuse and neglect; community planning; and self-help. Readers are encouraged to consult other manuals for additional information on ways in which child abuse and neglect can be most effectively addressed in their communities. Information about the other manuals in the series may be obtained from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect.

For the individual educator who wishes to assume a leadership role in community child abuse and neglect prevention efforts, the opportunities are limitless. The educator may help to organize child abuse and neglect case consultation teams, develop educational policies and procedures for action by the Board of Education or central administrative staff, spearhead a public awareness campaign, or lead a self-help group for abusive and neglectful families in treatment.

With support of colleagues, the educator can design inservice programs on child abuse and neglect for all staff, develop programs for adolescent parents, and recommend courses in parenting and life skills for all students. With others in the community the educator can press for new resources, staff and funding for specific programs for families and children at risk, implement a child abuse and neglect case consultation team or community child abuse and neglect task force, and develop political support for needed child abuse and neglect prevention programs.

With a committed individual at the focal point, community support can coalesce. It will then be only a matter of time until the community has an effective, broad based child abuse and neglect management and prevention program. But it takes that committed individual. Who better than an educator to lead the way?

I

UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

NATURE OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child abuse and neglect is very difficult to define, so difficult in fact that there is still no standard definition which would be acceptable to all or even most professionals familiar with these problems. Because of the reality that child abuse and neglect does occur, a number of different definitions have been formulated for practical use, and these reflect the purpose for which they were constructed.

Every state has one or more legal definitions of child abuse and neglect in its laws to establish official reporting procedures and to define jurisdiction. Various agencies, in turn, develop their own operational definitions for reporting and accepting cases.

Definitions of abuse and neglect are based on assumptions regarding the dependent nature of children. Until children are physically and mentally mature, they are dependent on adults for survival and for appropriate socialization. Although society generally places these responsibilities on the child's parents, at the same time society grants to the parents certain basic rights: to raise their children in accordance with their personal and religious beliefs, to preserve privacy in their homes, and to make decisions for their children until they are of age.

Child abuse and neglect laws are intended to place an important restriction on these rights; that is, children may not be harmed or threatened with harm as a result of their parent's behavior. Thus, the prevailing values of the community influence local definitions of child abuse and neglect because they influence attitudes regarding adequate child care and protection of the child.

Most definitions of child abuse and neglect, without regard to their uses, have common elements. Most describe the parents' or caretakers' unacceptable acts or omissions, the intent behind the acts or omissions, and the harmful effect to the child of those acts or omissions. (The acts or omissions that are generally considered abusive or neglectful will be considered in Section III.)

The subjective reactions of professionals who come into contact with abused or neglected children are also an important element in defining abuse and neglect because these subjective reactions will affect the way in which the definition is applied and interpreted. The individual's subjectivity is influenced by a number of factors, including: cultural values, personal values, and professional training.

Because of the difficulty in defining abuse and neglect, and because the use of these definitions is, by nature, subjective, great care must be taken in the actual determination of abuse and neglect occurrences. It is crucial for all professionals to remember that there are large grey areas which might be considered abuse or neglect by them today but might not by someone else tomorrow. Families may frequently pass in and out of this grey area, and this movement influences the way the family is labeled and treated.

An example of a definition which brings together many forms of abuse and neglect under one conceptual framework follows: an abused or neglected child means a child whose physical or mental health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm by the acts or omissions of his parent or other person responsible for his welfare.

EXTENT OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Because child abuse and neglect usually occur in the privacy of the home, no one knows exactly how many children are affected. Child abuse and neglect must be discovered and reported before the child can be protected, and there is general agreement that this never happens in a majority of abuse and neglect incidents.

There have been a number of estimates made of the incidence of child maltreatment, but they are unproven. The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect estimates that approximately one million children are maltreated by their parents each year. Of these children, as many as 100,000 to 200,000 are physically abused, 60,000 to 100,000 are sexually abused, and the remainder are neglected. And each year, more than 2,000 children die in circumstances suggestive of abuse or neglect. However, there is at present no sure way of determining the exact extent of the occurrence of abuse and neglect.

CAUSES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

No one factor accounts for child abuse and neglect. There are a variety of manifestations and causes. Some generally accepted causes of the abuse and neglect of children include severe emotional pressures or psychopathologies, the cultural heritage of violence, and burdens resulting from poverty. Instead of one factor which leads to abuse or neglect, there are multiple forces on the family which reinforce each other and which cause abuse and neglect. It is possible to divide these forces into four categories: individual capacities, attitudes and values, specific life situations, and general community welfare.

Individual Capacities

Intrapersonal forces include such factors as physical health, mental health, intelligence, personality and previous life experiences. All of these forces operate in parents and children, and they reflect both innate and experiential influences. These are probably the most constant influences on behavior.

Attitudes and Values

There are a variety of cultural forces which are incorporated as attitudes and values by individuals and which influence families and their relationships. These forces always exist, but they change more frequently than the other forces impacting on families. These forces include attitudes toward: children, changing family roles, violence, corporal punishment, economic and social competition, and religion, among others.

Specific Life Situations

Situational forces, either chronic or acute, may affect parents' relationships with their children. These forces can include marital relationships, employment situations, presence of extended family members, housing conditions, financial security and amount of social contact. If these forces have a positive effect, they can strengthen family ties, whereas if they are negative they reinforce any other problems which the family is experiencing.

Most families will experience a mixture of positive and negative situational forces. The type of mixture and the family's coping abilities will determine the impact of these various situational forces.

General Community Welfare

The general community welfare is largely defined by social institutions which affect families on various levels, depending on the purpose of the institution. For example, some institutions, including businesses, churches, schools, police, fire departments, radio, television and newspapers, affect everyone. Some institutions, which are more problem-oriented, affect only specific groups. These include such institutions as mental health departments, child welfare institutions, drug and alcohol abuse clinics, poverty or social welfare institutions. On a third level are those institutions that deal directly with problems of child abuse and neglect, such as child protective services and juvenile courts.

Any of the above institutions can have either a positive or negative affect on the occurrence of child abuse and neglect. They may either contribute to the well-being of the family and thus help to prevent child abuse and neglect; or they may exacerbate the problems of family members and generate new crises which could cause child abuse or neglect.

Forces in Combination

Child abuse and neglect are most likely to occur when there is a combination of negative forces affecting the family. These forces work together and reinforce each other. Such a combination can be quite devastating, especially for a family which is not as well equipped to cope with problems as most other families.

EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child abuse and neglect can result in permanent and serious damage to the physical, emotional, and mental development of the child. The physical effects of child abuse and neglect may include damage to the brain, vital organs, eyes, ears, arms or legs. These injuries may, in turn, result in mental retardation, blindness, deafness or loss of a limb. Abuse or neglect may cause arrested development. At its most serious, of course, abuse or neglect may result in the death of a child.

Child abuse and neglect are often as damaging emotionally as they are physically. Abused or neglected children may be impaired in self concept, ego competency, reality testing, defensive functioning and overall thought processes. They also often have a higher level of aggression, anxiety, low impulse control, and self-destructiveness. These characteristics can cause abused or

neglected children to display high levels of antisocial behavior as they get older.

Abuse and neglect may also result in restricted cognitive development. Language, perceptual, and motor skills are often underdeveloped, further hindering the child's chances to succeed.

II

WHY EDUCATORS SHOULD BE INVOLVED

There are many reasons why educators become involved in child abuse and neglect treatment and prevention. Among them are the fact that educators work with and for children; that law and policy command educator involvement, and professional responsibility demands it; and that educators have a deep sense of personal commitment to the children in their care.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

The most practical reason for educators to become involved in the identification, treatment and prvention of child abuse and neglect is that child abuse and neglect are part of the every day reality of working with and for children. Abused and neglected children may be found in almost every school in the country; educators are in a unique position to help those children, their families, child protective services, and the community in overcoming the effects of child abuse and neglect.

Abuse and Neglect of School Age Children

The fact that abused and neglected children may be found in any classroom in any school in every community across the nation is a compelling reason for educators to become involved in child abuse and neglect treatment and prevention. For many years it was thought that child abuse and neglect was a problem primarily of the very young child -- the child under the age of three. Recent research, the results of longitudinal studies, and better data-gathering, however, now indicate that more than half of the abused and neglected children in America (probably more than 500,000 nationwide) are of school age. In some instances, a child may have been abused or neglected prior to reaching school age, but these situations may not come to anyone's attention until the child enters school. For that reason, if for no other, schools and educators must take an active role in child abuse and neglect treatment and prevention.

Child Abuse and Neglect as a Responsibility of Schools

Schools are the only places in which children are seen daily over periods of time by professionals trained to observe their appearance and behavior. Not only does the school setting offer a

continuum of time for observation, it offers the unique opportunity to compare and contrast behaviors which are unusual with those which are not unusual.

Educators are often aware that something is not right with a child long before severe physical injury is present. Properly prepared educators can offer a keen case-finding and management tool in the very place where children are to be found most often.

Sometimes educators are overwhelmed at the thought of the schools taking on yet another responsibility, and one which at first glance seems so far removed from learning. But more and more the school is coming to be viewed not just as a place for educating youth, but as a resource, a means of meeting many other needs of children, and that trend is likely to continue.

The Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect on Learning

Child abuse and neglect is clearly related to learning. Research has indicated that abused and neglected children often demonstrate significant learning problems and below grade-level performance in key academic areas. If schools are truly to teach, they cannot ignore the reasons why children cannot learn. Dyslexic children, or children who are mentally impaired or physically handicapped are given special attention by the schools in an effort to enhance their learning. Indeed, federal law requires that schools provide education for these children. The abused or neglected child is entitled to no less.

Child Abuse and Neglect as a Community Problem

There is a community issue which directly affects the schools. Child abuse and neglect is a community problem; its solution requires community action. As a focal point in the community, the school must be prepared to do its part. The problem of child abuse and neglect will not be solved without the involvement of the educator and the school. Educators must indicate their willingness to help, and the community must make them welcome. Otherwise a valuable tool will be lost, and the school, the very agency which offers the greatest hope for the prevention of child abuse and neglect, will remain outside the mainstream of community action to reduce child abuse and neglect.

LEGAL ISSUES

The force of law supports the involvement of educators in child abuse and neglect detection. In fact, educators will find that many state laws provide penalties for not reporting suspected abuse or neglect--in a sense a penalty for not being involved. Additionally, many local school policies require the involvement of educators in child abuse and neglect.

State Laws on Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Most states require (and no state forbids) the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect by educators. The range of educators required to report is broad. It includes principals, teachers, counselors, school nurses, and staff of residential institutions, day care centers and summer camps. In those states which mandate reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect by "any person," school support services personnel, such as school secretaries, bus drivers, health aides and custodial staff are also included.

*INFORMATION KEY #1: Who Must Report?

According to laws in this state, persons required to report suspected child abuse and neglect include:

_____

_____

_____

_____

*Throughout the text of this manual are a series of "Information Keys" designed to provide specific information for local school districts and individual schools. Educators are encouraged to fill in these "Information Keys" in order to provide the most useful information possible for all persons in the system or school who will need to know what to do in terms of child abuse and neglect problems which arise.

Non-reporting Penalties and Reporting Immunity From Liability

Many states provide penalties for those mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect but who fail to do so. These penalties may include fines of up to $1,000 or prison sentences of up to one year, or both. On the other hand, every state provides immunity from civil liability and/or criminal penalty for those who do report suspected child abuse and neglect, provided the report has been made in good faith.

In other words, the law is relatively simple. In general, it requires the involvement of educators in child abuse and neglect problems. It provides protection to those educators who become involved, but penalizes those who fail in their obligation.

INFORMATION KEY #2: Reporting-Immunity/ Liability

Persons in this state who report suspected child abuse and neglect in good faith are immune from civil liability and/or criminal penalty.

Persons who suspect child abuse and neglect but do no report are subject to:

_____ No penalty

_____ A penalty up to _____

_____

Local Policy

Local policy may also support the involvement of educators in the identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect. There is a growing trend across the nation for school systems and Boards of Education to enact child abuse and neglect policies and regulations. These policies usually support state law by requiring educators to report suspected child abuse and neglect and may provide administrative penalties for non-compliance. Many go further by encouraging educators to become involved in the prevention and treatment

of child abuse and neglect. Such policies may: provide for periodic staff development, or for representation on a community child abuse and neglect case consultation team;[1] direct that staff support Child Protective Services (CPS) by participating in CPS's initial investigation; or offer direct service to involved families. Thus, in many communities administrative regulations also require the involvement of educators in the child abuse and neglect problem. For an example of a model policy for schools in responding to child abuse and neglect, see Appendix B.

INFORMATION KEY #3: Local School Policy

This local school or district:

____ does have a child abuse and neglect policy. In summary, the policy is:

_____

_____

____ does not have a child abuse and neglect policy. (If no policy exists, should one be adopted, and if so what should it say to adequately reflect state law?)

_____

_____

[1]Case consultation teams may be designated by a number of different names including multidisciplinary teams or child protection teams.

ETHICAL ISSUES

At the heart of the question of the involvement of educators in the child abuse and neglect problem may well be the ethical basis of the profession itself. Some of the strongest reasons for involvement come from the professional responsibilities, basic principles of justice and democratic ideals, and the personal commitment of educators to the well-being of the children and families they serve.

Professional Responsibility

Educators have a keen sense of professional responsibility to the children in their care. They are concerned about these children, about their health, their safety, their happiness. Educators are aware that they are models and examples for the children they teach, and that they are the only readily available source of support, concern, and caring for many children. Educators want to do what is best for the children in their care because their professional standards require it.

Justice and Democratic Ideals

In a very real sense, educators are symbols of the American principles of "justice for all." They teach responsibility and respect for the democratic ideals of equal protection under the law and duty to uphold the law. When it comes to abused and neglected children, educators are obligated to practice what they teach. Ethics require their involvement in child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment.

Personal Commitment

For many educators, their professional responsibility and respect for the law is supported by a deep personal commitment to the welfare of children. The value of this personal commitment must not be underestimated, for without it, child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment efforts can be no more than superficial academic exercises. It is this sense of personal responsibility to and for children that is perhaps the strongest reason for educators to become involved in the struggle against child abuse and neglect.

III

RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN THE CLASSROOM SETTING

Each form of child abuse and neglect -- physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment -- can be found among school-age children. Sensitive educators can often identify a particular type of maltreatment through the child's appearance or behavior at school or during routine interviews with parent or child by recognizing physical and behavioral indicators. Academic and psychological clues can also provide some evidence of possible maltreatment.

Physical indicators of child abuse and neglect are indicators which usually are readily observable. They may be mild or severe, but they involve the child's physical appearance. Frequently, physical indicators are skin or bone injuries, or evidence of lack of care and attention manifested in conditions such as malnutrition.

Educators are trained observers of children's behavior. They are sensitive to the range of behavior expected of children of a given group, and they are quick to notice behaviors which fall outside this range. Particularly for the educator, behavior can often be a clue to the presence of child abuse and neglect. Behavioral indicators may exist alone or may accompany physical indicators. They range from subtle clues, a "sixth sense" that something is amiss, to graphic statements by children that they have been physically assaulted or sexually molested.

Physical and behavioral indicators are displayed in Chart I, following this page. The list is not exhaustive; many more indicators exist than can be included. Neither does the presence of a single indicator prove that maltreatment exists. However, the repeated presence of an indicator, the presence of several indicators in combination, or the appearance of serious injury should alert the educator to the possibility that a case of child abuse and neglect is at hand.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse of children includes any non-accidental physical injury caused by the child's caretaker. It may include burning, beating, branding, punching and so on. By definition the injury

CHART I

PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

TYPE OF CA/N	PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS
PHYSICAL ABUSE	Unexplained Bruises and Welts: - on face, lips, mouth - on torso, back, buttocks, thighs - in various stages of healing - clustered, forming regular patterns - reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle) - on several different surface areas - regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation Unexplained Burns: - cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks - immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like, doughnut shaped on buttocks or genitalia) - patterned like electric burner, iron, etc. - rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso Unexplained Fractures: - to skull, nose, facial structure - in various stages of healing - multiple or spiral fractures Unexplained Lacerations or Abrasions: - to mouth, lips, gums, eyes - to external genitalia	Wary of Adult Contacts Apprehensive When Other Children Cry Behavioral Extremes: - aggressiveness, or - withdrawal Frightened of Parents Afraid to go Home Reports Injury by Parents
PHYSICAL NEGLECT	Consistent Hunger, Poor Hygiene, Inappropriate Dress Consistent Lack of Supervision, Especially in Dangerous Activities or Long Periods Unattended Physical Problems or Medical Needs Abandonment	Begging, Stealing Food Extended Stays at School (early arrival and late departure) Constant Fatigue, Listlessness or Falling Asleep in Class Alcohol or Drug Abuse Delinquency (e.g. thefts) States There Is No Caretaker
SEXUAL ABUSE	Difficulty in Walking or Sitting Torn, Stained or Bloody Underclothing Pain or Itching in Genital Area Bruises or Bleeding in External Genitalia, Vaginal or Anal Areas Veneral Disease, Especially in Pre-teens Pregnancy	Unwilling to Change for Gym or Participate in Physical Education Class Withdrawal, Fantasy or Infantile Behavior Bizarre, Sophisticated, or Unusual Sexual Behavior or Knowledge Poor Peer Relationships Delinquent or Run Away Reports Sexual Assault by Caretaker
EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT	Speech Disorders Lags in Physical Development Failure-to-thrive	Habit Disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.) Conduct Disorders (antisocial, destructive, etc.) Neurotic Traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play) Psychoneurotic Reactions (hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias, hypochondria) Behavior Extremes: - compliant, passive - aggressive, demanding Overly Adaptive Behavior: - inappropriately adult - inappropriately infant Developmental Lags (mental, emotional) Attempted Suicide

is not an accident. But neither is it necessarily the intent of the child's caretaker to injure the child. Physical abuse may result from overdiscipline or from punishment which is inappropriate to the child's age or condition.

Physical Indicators of Physical Abuse

Physical indicators of physical abuse in the school-age child include:

- Unexplained bruises and welts
  - on the face, lips, or mouth
  - in various stages of healing (bruises of different colors, for example, or old and new scars together)
  - on large areas of the torso, back, buttocks or thighs
  - clustered, forming regular patterns, or reflective of the article used to inflict them (electrical cord; belt buckle)
  - on several different surface areas (indicating the child has been hit from different directions)
  - regularly noted as fading marks when the child returns to school after an absence, weekend, or vacation
- Unexplained burns
  - cigar or cigarette burns, especially on the soles of the feet, palms of the hands, back or buttocks
  - immersion or "wet" burns, including glove- or sock-line burns and doughnut-shaped burns on the buttocks or genitalia
  - patterned or "dry" burns which show a clearly defined mark left by the instrument used to inflict them (e.g., electric burner; iron)
  - rope burns on the arms, legs, neck or torso

- Unexplained fractures
  - to the skull, nose, or facial structure
  - in various stages of healing (indicating they occurred at different times)
  - multiple or spiral fractures
  - swollen or tender limbs
  - any fracture in a child under the age of two
- Unexplained lacerations and abrasions
  - to the mouth, lips, gums or eyes
  - to the external genitalia
  - on the backs of the arms, legs, or torso
- Unexplained abdominal injuries
  - swelling of the abdomen
  - localized tenderness
  - constant vomitting
- Human bite marks, especially when they appear adult size or are recurrent.

Behavioral Indicators of Physical Abuse

Conduct, too, can be a tip-off to the presence of child abuse and neglect. Abused and neglected children may demonstrate certain characteristic behavior or conduct which can be spotted by the sensitive educator. For the adolescent particularly, behavior may be the only clue to child abuse and neglect. These behaviors may exist independent of or in conjunction with physical indicators.

The following are some of the behaviors which may be associated with physical abuse. The educator should be alert for the child who:

- is wary of physical contact with adults. In the classroom, most children accept physical closeness to a teacher. The abused child will often avoid it, sometimes even shrinking at the touch or approach of an adult

- becomes apprehensive when other children cry

- demonstrates extremes in behavior -- extreme aggressiveness or extreme withdrawal, for example -- behavior which lies outside the range expected for the child's age group

- seems frightened of the parents

- states he/she is afraid to go home, or cries when it is time to leave

- reports injury by a parent.

NEGLECT

Neglect involves inattention to the basic needs of a child, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and supervision. While physical abuse tends to be episodic, neglect tends to be chronic. When considering the possibility of neglect, it is important to note the consistency of indicators. Do they occur rarely, or frequently? Are they chronic (there most of the time), periodic (noticeable after weekends or absences), or episodic (seen twice this semester when there was illness in the family)? In a given community or sub-population, do all the children display these indicators, or only a few? Is this culturally acceptable child-rearing, a different life-style, or true neglect? Answers to questions like these can be extremely helpful in differentiating between neglect and differing ways of life.

Physical Indicators of Neglect

Physical indicators of neglect include:

- constant hunger, poor hygiene, or inappropriate clothing

- consistent lack of supervision, especially when engaged in dangerous activities or over extended periods of time

- constant fatigue or listlessness
- unattended physical problems or medical needs, such as untreated or infected wounds
- abandonment.

Behavioral Indicators of Neglect

The educator should be alert for the child who

- is begging or stealing food
- constantly falls asleep in class
- rarely attends school
- comes to school very early and leaves very late
- is addicted to alcohol or other drugs
- is engaging in delinquent acts such as vandalism or theft
- states that there is no one to care for or look after him/her.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse includes any contacts or interactions between a child and an adult in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. Sexual abuse may also be committed by a person under the age of 18 when that person is either significantly older than the victim or when the perpetrator is in a position of power or control over another child.

Physical Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is not often discovered in a school setting through physical indicators alone. Frequently a child confides in a trusted teacher or counselor or nurse that he or she has been sexually assaulted or molested by a caretaker, and that may be the first sign that sexual abuse is occurring.

There are some physical signs to be alert for, however. These include:

- difficulty in walking or sitting
- torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- complaints of pain or itching in the genital area
- bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal area
- venereal disease, particularly in a child under 13
- pregnancy, especially in early adolescence.

Behavioral Indicators of Sexual Abuse

The sexually abused child may

- appear withdrawn; engage in fantasy or infantile behavior; even appear retarded
- have poor peer relationships
- be unwilling to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- engage in delinquent acts, or run away
- display bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- state he/she has been sexually assaulted by a caretaker.

EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT

Emotional maltreatment includes blaming, belittling or rejecting a child; constantly treating siblings unequally; and persistent lack of concern by the caretaker for the child's welfare. Emotional maltreatment is rarely manifest in physical signs, particularly in the normal school setting; speech disorders, lags in physical development, and failure-to-thrive syndrome (which is a progressive wasting away usually associated with lack of mothering) are physical indicators of emotional maltreatment. More often it is observed through behavioral indicators, and even these indicators may not be immediately apparent.

While emotional maltreatment does occur alone, it often accompanies physical abuse and sometimes sexual abuse. Emotionally maltreated children are not always physically abused. But physically abused children are almost always emotionally maltreated as well.

Behavioral Indicators of Emotional Maltreatment

The emotionally maltreated child may demonstrate the following behavioral characteristics[1]:

- habit disorders such as sucking, biting, rocking, enuresis, or feeding disorders
- conduct disorders including withdrawal and anti-social behavior such as destructiveness, cruelty and stealing
- neurotic traits such as sleep disorders and inhibition of play
- psychoneurotic reactions including hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias and hypochondria
- behavior extremes such as appearing overly compliant, extremely passive or aggressive, very demanding or undemanding
- overly adaptive behaviors which are either inappropriately adult (parenting other children for example) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, head-banging, or thumbsucking, for example)
- lags in emotional and intellectual development
- attempted suicide.

The behavior of emotionally maltreated and emotionally disturbed children is similar. However, parental behavior can help to distinguish disturbance from maltreatment. The parents of an emotionally disturbed child generally accept the existence of a problem. They are concerned about the child's welfare and are actively seeking help. The parents of an emotionally maltreated child often blame the child for the problem (or ignore its existence), refuse all offers of help, and are unconcerned about the child's welfare.

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[1] Protective Services and Emotional Neglect. Max Wald. Denver: The American Humane Association, 1961, pp. 6-7.

GENERAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

There are some indicators which, rather than signalling the presence of one particular type of abuse or neglect, may be general signs that the child is experiencing abuse and/or neglect at home. These general indicators include academic clues and emotional/psychological clues.

Academic Clues

Academic performance can be a tip-off to the presence of child abuse and neglect. This is particularly true when there are sudden changes in performance. Previously good students who suddenly seem disinterested in school, or who are no longer prepared for class, may be emotionally maltreated. Athletes who suddenly refuse to change for gym class may be concealing evidence of beatings. Children whose broken glasses have not been replaced may no longer have someone looking after them.

Recent studies have revealed a relationship between child abuse and neglect and certain learning problems. For example, delays have been reported in the acquisition of language and of gross motor skills among abused children. In a study of abused children in Utah it was found that the majority were below grade level in reading, spelling and math. In addition, according to the same study, three times the expected number were placed in Special Education Classes.

In a study of 328 children adjudicated "dependent" in Los Angeles, it was found that 25% of the abused children and 64% of the neglected children demonstrated delay in motor development. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the abused children and 72% of the neglected children demonstrated delay in language development. In academic performance, 53% of the abused and 82% of the neglected children were rated "Below Average" or "Failing."

Other researchers have associated abuse with diminished intellectual capacity, but whether the diminished capacity preceded or followed the abuse is not clear. Research does indicate, however, that the child who is physically handicapped or mentally impaired is at a statistically greater risk of child abuse and neglect than the normal child. In some instances, the handicapped child may be viewed as a disappointment, a burden, or proof of the parents' "failure." Special educators will want to be sensitive to the particular stresses having a handicapped child can produce in some families. It is well known that children whose physical

needs and problems are ignored may experience learning difficulties. Children who are always hungry, or who cannot see the blackboard or hear the teacher because needed glasses or hearing aids have not been provided, cannot learn well and this inability to learn will be reflected in academic achievement.

Of course, academic difficulties may have a variety of causes and the presence of an academic problem does not prove that child abuse or neglect exists. But, the possibility of child abuse and neglect must be considered -- along with other possible causes -- when the problem is assessed.

Emotional/Psychological Clues

Educators are sensitive to the child who is "different" -- learning disabled, handicapped, or whatever. That sensitivity can be extended to abused and neglected children, who may also appear to be different.

Educators must be alert for the children who are disparate, those who are the exceptions. Such children may be hostile and angry, effectively alienating all who come in contact with them. Or they may be completely passive, withdrawn and uncommunicative. In any case, they represent extremes in the expected range of behavior, attitude, and affect.

Sudden changes in a child's emotional or psychological well being may also be a clue to child abuse and neglect. The previously happy child who is now sullen and angry all the time may be reflecting changes in the family's home life. The previously gregarious child who is now uncommunicative may be concealing something upsetting.

Children are often barometers of family life: sunny when things are fine, stormy when they are not. A sudden change in attitude or affect does not prove that child abuse and neglect exists. But, maltreatment should be one of the possibilities considered when the problem situation is assessed.

RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT THROUGH INTERVIEWS

For an educator, a good deal of important information about a family can be gathered from routine conversations with parents and children. Parents and children will often reveal details of family life, discuss methods of discipline, or directly ask for help with a problem in talking with a classroom teacher, school administrator, nurse, or counselor.

Conversations with the parent can provide clues to how the parent feels about the child. The presence of child abuse and neglect may be indicated if the parent constantly:

- blames or belittles the child
- sees the child as "bad," "evil," a "monster"
- seems unconcerned about the child
- finds nothing good or attractive in the child
- fails to keep appointments or refuses to discuss problems the child may be having in school
- misuses alcohol or other drugs
- behaves in a bizarre or irrational way.

The educator who knows a child's family is in a better position to gauge whether a problem may be child abuse and neglect or something else; a chronic condition, or a temporary situation; something the school can readily handle, or a problem that demands outside intervention. Family circumstances may also provide clues regarding the possible presence of abuse or neglect. When families are isolated from friends, neighbors or family, or where there is no apparent "life-line" to which a family can turn in times of crisis, the risk of abuse or neglect increases. Crises in marital, economic, emotional or social factors in a family should be assessed carefully as possible causes of family stress.

Sometimes, when considering the possibility of child abuse and neglect, the educator may want to talk with parent or child about a particular incident. Such a conversation is appropriate provided it is done nonjudgmentally, carefully and professionally.

Talking With the Child

When it is necessary to talk with a child concerning a possible inflicted injury or condition of neglect, the interviewer must keep in mind that the child may be hurt, in pain, fearful or apprehensive. The child must be made as comfortable as possible in the circumstances.

The interviewer should be a person the child trusts and respects. While the interviewer may be joined by a colleague, groups of

interviewers should be avoided. The conversation should be conducted in a quiet, private, nonthreatening place, free of interruptions. The school library, a conference room or an office are possible choices. The child should be put at ease, and the interviewer should sit near the child, not behind a desk or table.

Children should be assured that they are not in trouble, that they have done nothing wrong. Children often feel, or are told, that they are to blame for their own maltreatment and for bringing "trouble" to the family. Therefore it is important to reassure children that they are not at fault.

The child should be told that the conversation is confidential. If it is going to be necessary to reveal to someone else some of what the child has said, this should be made clear. The child should be assured that only essential information will be shared with appropriate authorities and that other teachers and the child's classmates will not be told about what has happened.

Questions and discussion should be in language the child understands. If in describing something--an incident of sexual assault, for example--the child uses a term with which the interviewer is not familiar (a word for a part of the body, for example) the interviewer should ask for clarification or have the child point to the part that is meant. The interviewer should not disparage the child's choice of language; rather the interviewer should use the child's terms to put the child at ease and to avoid confusion.

The interviewer is not an inquisitor. Children should not be pressed for answers or details they are unwilling or unable to give. Answers should not be suggested to the child, and when the essential information has been gathered, the conversation should be concluded. Under no circumstances should the interviewer indicate horror, disgust, anger or disapproval of parents, child, or the situation.

If children wish to show their injuries to the interviewer, they should be allowed to do so. But if a child is unwilling to show an injury, the interviewer should not insist. At no time should children be forced to remove clothing.

If, as a result of the conversation, further action will be taken, the child should be told what will happen and when. (If nothing will happen for many days or weeks, the interviewer may wish to refer to future action, but delay giving the child details until just beforehand.) The interviewer should assure the child of

support and assistance throughout the process and should follow through on the assurances. Under no circumstances should the child be asked to conceal from the parents that the conversation has taken place or that further action is contemplated.

Sometimes, during the course of an official investigation into a report of suspected child abuse and neglect, a worker from Child Protective Services (CPS) will need to interview a child at school. If this occurs, the school should provide a private place for the interview and someone from the school whom the child trusts should be present throughout the interview. If it is necessary for the CPS worker to remove the child from school for a medical examination perhaps, the school may wish to request a written release from the worker.

Talking With the Parents

There are several points at which educators may wish to communicate with parents about suspected child abuse and neglect. Communication might be indicated in order to get to know the family situation better. Or parents may be contacted to inform them that the school has made a report of suspected child abuse and neglect. It is never appropriate for an educator to contact a parent in an effort to "prove" a case of maltreatment by accusations or demands for explanation.

Thought should be given to the most appropriate person to meet with the parents. In some cases, this will be the classroom teacher. In others, the principal or a pupil services staff member will be preferred. In still others, a combination of teacher-administrator or teacher-counselor will be best.

Parents may be apprehensive or angry at the prospect of talking with the school about an injured or neglected child. It is important to make the parents as comfortable as possible. The conversation should be conducted in private, and the parents should be told at the beginning why the discussion is taking place. If any action has occurred or will occur in the near future (a report of suspected child abuse and neglect filed, for example), the parent should be told and the legal authority for the action made clear.

The interviewer should be professional, direct, and honest. If parents offer explanations, the interviewer should be sympathetic. The interviewer should never display anger, repugnance, or shock.

Parents should be assured of the confidentiality of the interview, but if some of what is discussed must be revealed to a third party, that should be made clear. The interviewer should avoid prying into matters extraneous to the subject of the interview and should never betray the child's confidence to the parents.

Parents should be assured of the school's support for them and its continuing interest in the child. It is important not to alienate the family. Regardless of the outcome of the current situation, the school is likely to continue serving the family, perhaps for many years to come.

Whether interviewing parent or child, the educator should keep in mind that situations that appear to be maltreatment may turn out to be something else. Thus it is well to conduct oneself professionally by adhering to facts, and by avoiding placing blame and making judgments and accusations.

Occasionally an angry parent will come to school demanding to know why someone is "telling me how to raise my children." This is likely to happen particularly when the school has not informed the parent that it has filed a report of suspected child abuse and neglect. Parents have the right to know that a report has been made. They often feel betrayed, or that someone has "gone behind their back," when they are not told. In any case, the parents nearly always know where the report has come from, and attempts at concealment only anger them further.

Should angry parents appear at school, they should be handled exactly as any other parent angry over any matter -- a failing grade, for example -- is handled. In addition, the legal obligation to report should be stressed and the school's concern for the child reaffirmed.

Increasingly schools are making it routine practice to notify parents when a report of suspected child abuse and neglect has been made by a staff member. The notification is firm, but kind. It states the legal authority for the report, and casts no blame. Parents are told to expect a visit from CPS or other investigating agency and offered the support and concern of the school.

Schools that have instituted this procedure report good results. Parents are less hostile and resentful when they understand that the school has a legal obligation it must fulfill. In addition, they often appreciate an expression of concern or an offer of support at a time which, after all, is a very difficult one for them.

"Do's and Dont's" of Interviewing

Chart II, following this page, summarizes some of the above points in terms of some "Do's and Don'ts" of interviewing. Local schools may wish to add other items to these lists based on local policy and procedures.

CHART II

SOME "DO'S AND DON'TS" OF INTERVIEWING

When Talking with the Child

DO:

- Make sure the interviewer is someone the child trusts
- Conduct the interview in private
- Sit next to the child, not across a table or desk
- Tell the child that the interview is confidential
- Conduct the interview in language the child understands
- Ask the child to clarify words/terms which are not understood
- Tell the child if any future action will be required

_____

_____

DON'T:

- Allow the child to feel "in trouble" or "at fault"
- Disparage or criticize the child's choice of words or language
- Suggest answers to the child
- Probe or press for answers the child is unwilling to give
- Display horror, shock, or disapproval of parents, child, or the situation
- Force the child to remove clothing
- Conduct the interview with a group of interviewers
- Leave the child alone with a stranger (e.g., a CPS worker)

_____

_____

When Talking With the Parents

DO:

- Select interviewer(s) appropriate to the situation
- Conduct the interview in private
- Tell the parent(s) why the interview is taking place
- Be direct, honest and professional
- Tell the parent(s) the interview is confidential
- Reassure the parents of the support of the school
- Tell the parents if a report has been made or will be made
- Advise the parent(s) of the school's legal responsibilities to report

_____

_____

DON'T:

- Try to "prove" abuse or neglect by accusations or demands
- Display horror, anger, or disapproval of parent(s), child, or situation
- Pry into family matters unrelated to the specific situation
- Place blame or make judgements about the parent(s) or child

_____

_____

IV

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The involvement of educators in the reporting of child abuse and neglect is supported by federal standards and regulations, state laws, and local policies and procedures. Each of these levels provides authority for, encourages or mandates educator involvement in the reporting process by stating what is required of the educator and how that obligation is to be fulfilled.

FEDERAL STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

At the federal level, there are some pertinent standards and regulations that are directly applicable to reporting of child abuse and neglect by educators. They include the draft *Federal Standards For Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Treatment Programs and Projects* (hereafter referred to as the Federal Standards) from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN), the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, and the *Head Start Policy Manual* from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (DHEW).

Federal Standards

In 1973, the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect issued their draft Federal Standards. These standards are not regulations which must be complied with; rather they are standards of good practice which should be followed by any agency wishing to have an effective, well-balanced child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment program.

The draft Federal Standards represent the culmination of a long process of review and analysis of current practice. They encompass a broad range of topics such as reporting procedures, treatment approaches, prevention programs, and coordination of public and private programs, and they include guidelines for achieving change. Standards applicable to the educational system are listed in Appendix A. Educators are urged to consult these Standards as they plan child abuse and neglect programs of their own.

Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which governs the release of information from school records, does

not bar the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect by educators.[1] In the majority of cases, however, educators will be relying not on school records, but on their own personal knowledge and observations when reporting a case of suspected child abuse and neglect. Since no school records are involved in these cases, FERPA does not apply.

In a small number of cases, however, it may be necessary to consult school records in order to determine whether a report of suspected child abuse and neglect should be made. Ordinarily parental consent is required before information contained in school records can be released. However, there are exceptions which can apply in the case of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Prior parental consent is not required when disclosing information from school records if a "health or safety emergency" exists. It is the position of NCCAN and the Fair Information Practice Staff (the DHEW unit which administers FERPA) that child abuse and neglect generally may be considered a "health or safety emergency" if the state definition of child abuse and neglect is limited to situations in which a child's health or safety is endangered. Further, NCCAN and the Fair Information Practice Staff have agreed that responsibility for determining whether a "health or safety emergency" exists must be made by the school official involved, on a case-by-case basis. Thus if a school official determines that an emergency exists, information contained in school records can be disclosed without parental consent and without violating the provisions of FERPA.

Another exception to the prior consent rule exists if the release of information contained in school records is made to:

> State and local officials or authorities to whom such information is specifically required to be disclosed pursuant to State statute adopted prior to November 19, 1974.

Most state child abuse and neglect reporting statutes both require reporting by educators to state or local authorities and were enacted prior to November, 1974. Thus, in the majority of states, release of information from school records to state or local CPS agencies is permitted under FERPA. Educators should check with legal counsel to be certain whether a particular state enacted a

reporting law prior to November 19, 1974 and to determine whether this exception to FERPA provisions applies in their jurisdiction.

A final exception to the prior parental consent rule is provided in FERPA Section 99. This section provides that any information contained in a school record may be released without parental consent to

> comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena; Provided that. . .(the school) makes a reasonable effort to notify the parent. . .in advance of compliance.

Head Start

Under regulations adopted in January 1976 as Chapter N-30-356-1 of the *Head Start Policy Manual*, all Head Start programs are required to report incidents of suspected child abuse and neglect to appropriate state or local authorities in accordance with the provisions of applicable state law. The regulations provide that each Head Start program designate a staff member who has responsibility for:

- Serving as liaison to CPS and other agencies mandated to receive reports of suspected child abuse and neglect
- Informing parents and staff of state and local laws regarding child abuse and neglect
- Knowing community resources available to families with child abuse and neglect problems
- Discussing the report with the family, as appropriate
- Informing other staff of the process for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect
- Reporting instances of child abuse and neglect on behalf of the Head Start program, where such indirect reporting is permitted.

The regulations also require staff orientation on child abuse and neglect and encourage orientation for parents, stressing help rather than punishment for affected families.

Head Start programs which do not comply with these regulations risk loss of funding or other appropriate action by DHEW.

STATE LAW

Each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the US territories have child abuse and neglect reporting statutes. While each of these laws differs from the others in one or more ways, all share a common framework. In general, state reporting statutes define child abuse and neglect, specify who must report it, to whom it must be reported and the form and content of the report. Because of the wide diversity in laws, particularly with regard to the definition of child abuse and neglect, and because of the need for accuracy, educators are advised to obtain a copy of their own state's reporting statute and to study its provisions carefully. A review of major points contained in most laws follows.

Who Reports

Currently, most states specifically require educators to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Just who is considered an educator varies from state-to-state, but among those included are: teachers, principals, administrators, school nurses, guidance counselors and pupil personnel workers in any school, whether public or nonpublic, day or residential; staff of licensed day care centers and child care institutions; and administrators of summer camps.

In some states teachers are required to report suspected child abuse and neglect directly to a specified agency. In other states, they are required to report to their principal who in turn is required to make the official report. State statutes specify which course reporting takes in a given jurisdiction. Information on educators' responsibilities in reporting is included in Chapter II.

What to Report

It is necessary to consult state statutes to be certain just what is considered maltreatment in a particular jurisdiction. However, most states include in their definition of child abuse and neglect some form of nonaccidential physical injury, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment (sometimes called emotional neglect or mental injury).

Most states require the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect; no state requires the reporter to have proof that abuse or neglect has occurred before reporting. The law may specify reporting of "suspected" incidents or include the phrase "reason to believe." In any case, the intent is clear: incidents are to be reported as soon as they are noticed. Waiting for proof may involve grave risk to the child. Proof may be long in coming; witnesses to child abuse

and neglect are rare, and the child's testimony may be disbelieved or inadmissible. Reports are made in terms of the child's possible condition, not in terms of an accusation against parents. A report of suspected child abuse and neglect states that a child may be an abused child, not that the parents are child abusers. Therefore, proof is not required of the reporter. Proving the case is properly left in the hands of trained investigators.

INFORMATION KEY #4: Definition of Child Abuse and Neglect

According to laws in this state, reportable child abuse and neglect is defined as:

_____

_____

_____

_____

When to Report

State statutes vary with respect to when a report must be filed. Reports may have to be made immediately, within 24 to 48 hours, or during some other specified time period. Sometimes more than one report is required, for example, a written and an oral report, with each report having its own specified time period. Again, it is necessary to check state statutes to be certain which provisions apply in a given jurisdiction.

INFORMATION KEY #5: When to Report

1. An oral report ___is/___is not required.
   If oral report is required, it must be made to the responsible agency within ___ hours.

2. A written report ___is/___is not required.
   If written report is required, it must be made to the responsible agency within ____ hours.

3. Special requirements:

   If the school or district has special reporting requirements, a _____ (type of report) must be made to _____ (name/position of person) within ____ hours.

Where to Report

Each state specifies one or more agencies as recipients of reports of suspected child abuse and neglect. Usually this agency (or one of the agencies if two or more are specified) is the department of social services, human resources, or public welfare. Other agencies mandated to receive reports may include the police department, health department, county or district attorney's office, or juvenile or district court.

The local department of social services or other receiving agency may maintain a special child abuse and neglect unit, often called Child Protective Services (CPS). If there is no special unit, the local department itself will have CPS responsibility. The CPS unit receives and investigates all reports of suspected child abuse and neglect and may be involved in treatment and rehabilitation of affected families.

It is important to be certain just who receives reports of suspected child abuse and neglect in a particular jurisdiction. Requirements of confidentiality should be observed so that reports are made only to authorized persons. The state reporting statute will provide this information. An attorney should be consulted if questions arise.

INFORMATION KEY #6: Where the Report Goes

For this school, reports on suspected child abuse and neglect are made to:

_____

Telephone Number: _____

Address: _____

_____

Note: Fill in above the agency to which the actual report is made, regardless of who, according to school procedures, makes the report. (See Information Keys #5 and #7)

How to Report

State statutes vary with regard to the form and contents of reports of suspected maltreatment. All states require that either an oral report or a written report or both be made to the agency or agencies specified as responsible for child abuse and neglect. When two reports are required, the oral report is usually required immediately, with the written report following within 24-48 hours.

Some state statutes will specify just what information is to be submitted in a report of suspected child abuse and neglect. Usually this includes:

- Child's name, age, and address
- Parent's name and address
- Nature and extent of the injury or condition observed
- Reporter's name and location (sometimes not required, but extremely valuable to the CPS unit).

In some states, additional information is required. This may include evidence of previous injury to the child or to another child in the same family; any information which would aid in establishing

the cause of the injury; and any information which would aid in identifying the person responsible for the injury.

To facilitate the making of an oral report of suspected child abuse and neglect, some states maintain a toll-free 24-hour telephone line just for receipt of reports of suspected maltreatment. Anyone may use this "hotline" to report an incident of suspected child abuse and neglect anywhere in the state.

To facilitate the making of written reports, some states (and some local school districts) provide a reporting form for suspected child abuse and neglect. However, an educator may not be excused for failing to report by claiming that reporting was not possible because no reporting form was available. The reporter may use any piece of paper so long as the required information is provided.

INFORMATION KEY #7: How to Report

The following information must be provided to:

_____
(name of person/position)

_____
(telephone number or address)

(If the above is a person within the school, see also Information Key #6)

Child's name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

_____

Parent's (s') name (s): _____

Address: _____

_____

Physical indicators observed: _____

_____

_____

Behavioral indicators observed: _____

_____

_____

Other indicators observed/known: _____

_____

_____

Reporter's name and position: _____

_____

Date of report: _____

LOCAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE REGARDING REPORTING

Across the country more and more school systems and local boards of education are enacting school policies and procedures regarding child abuse and neglect. The policies and procedures support state law with regard to reporting, and they often provide internal mechanisms to be followed when a case is reported. Some policies go beyond reporting by encouraging staff to become actively involved with families and children.

For example, local policy may specify that parents be notified when the school has reported a case of suspected child abuse and neglect. A particular staff member, often the building principal, may be given this responsibility. Local procedure may require that administrative staff be notified when a case is reported and that a copy of the written report be filed centrally. Procedures for record-keeping and destruction may be specified, or a program coordinator may be assigned this responsibility.

Enacting local policy is a good first step for a school system beginning a child abuse and neglect program. The policy clearly delineates duties and responsibilities for all staff. Equally important, it provides administrative back-up for line staff who do most of the reporting.

Educators are encouraged to learn whether their school system has a Board policy or an administrative procedure for child abuse and neglect. If no such policy or procedure exists, one should be developed.

INFORMATION KEY #8:

Special (Local) Reporting Requirements

Special requirements for reporting in this school include:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

DIFFICULTIES WHICH MAY BE ENCOUNTERED WHEN REPORTING

A report of suspected maltreatment is not an accusation. It is a request for the process of help to begin. But the reporting process does not always go smoothly. Difficulties may be encountered which can prove a bar to reporting or can discourage continued involvement in child abuse and neglect.

Personal Feelings

One of the biggest obstacles may be personal feelings. Some people just do not want to get involved; others may feel parents have the right to treat children in any way they wish. Generally, once it is understood that involvement is required and that child abuse and neglect differ from acceptable child-rearing practice, much of this reluctance disappears.

The better acquainted we are with someone, the closer they are to us, and the more difficult it is for us to admit they may have a problem. This is true for suspected child abuse and neglect as well. It may be extremely difficult for an educator to face the fact that the son of a colleague or the daughter of a neighbor has been abused or neglected. This is a natural feeling, but it must be overcome. The law does not exclude the children of friends and acquaintances from its protection.

Problems Internal to the School

Sometimes school principals place an obstacle in the way of reporting, discouraging teacher involvement by refusing to take teachers' reports seriously, or by failing to make an official report of suspected maltreatment once a situation has been brought to their attention. Such actions may be more than obstructive; they may be illegal.

Central administrative staff may provide no back-up to line staff, thus undercutting the reporter who has acted in the best interests of the child and complied with the law. Suddenly reporters find their motives questioned. Superintendents who fail to provide inservice training to staff in order to inform them of their legal obligations also may prove a bar to reporting. Staff who do not know the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect and who are unaware of their legal responsibilities will be usable to help abused and neglected childen.

Many of these procedural difficulties can be resolved if a reporting policy is adopted, reporting procedures are instituted, and staff development is made mandatory.

Previous Bad Experiences

Educators who have had an unfortunate experience when reporting suspected child abuse and neglect may be reluctant to become involved a second time. Such educators may have been discouraged from reporting, or may have developed a distrust of CPS (or another agency) or its staff, feeling that a previous case was not handled to their satisfaction. These concerns are real, and often valid. Things may not have gone as well as they should have. But a previous bad experience does not mean that the next time things will not be handled well. CPS agencies throughout the country are continually working to upgrade their services. They are becoming steadily more responsive and highly skilled. Communities are providing more resources and increased staff to handle the rising number of child abuse and neglect cases. Altogether the picture is brighter than it was even a year ago, and this trend is likely to continue. However, after an unfortunate experience with CPS agency response, the reporter should not hesitate to request that an agency supervisor intervene in the handling of the case.

Educators must report regardless of their concerns or previous experience. The law requires it, and no exemptions are granted to those who have had a bad experience. In addition, while reporting does not guarantee that the situation will improve, not reporting guarantees that, if abuse or neglect exists, the child will continue at risk.

The Belief That Nothing Will Be Done

Sometimes potential reporters become convinced that nothing will be done if they report, so they choose not to report. Aside from the legal considerations (failure to report is against the law in many states) such reasoning is faulty. If an incident of suspected child abuse and neglect is reported, some action will occur. At the very least, a record of the report will be made, the educator's legal obligation fulfilled, and the investigative process begun. On the other hand, if the incident is not reported, one may be sure that nothing will be done. Abused and neglected children cannot be protected unless they are first identified, and the key to identification is reporting.

V

AFTER THE REPORT--WHAT SCHOOLS CAN OFFER

Reporting is not the end of the child protective process: it is the beginning. Treatment, rehabilitation, the strengthening of family life, and prevention still lie ahead. Traditionally, the roles of school and educator in child abuse and neglect have stopped with reporting, but that is changing. Increasingly, schools and educators are providing assistance and support to CPS by sharing relevant information about specific families and children after they have been reported; by providing services for the child, parent, and the family; and by participating on a multidisciplinary team. Schools can also become actively involved in community efforts to reduce the incidence of child maltreatment.

SHARING OF RELEVANT INFORMATION

Although CPS is responsible for case management and follow-up after the report has been made, CPS will frequently find it necessary to consult with school personnel when making an assessment of the family and planning treatment. School personnel often have information (either in records or through personal knowledge) concerning the child and/or family's level of functioning, e.g., their strengths and weaknesses, etc. This information is invaluable to CPS in making an accurate assessment and formulating realistic treatment goals and objectives for the family.

In providing this information, schools must be conscious of the rights of children and parents. Schools can be an excellent resource for aiding CPS, but great care must be taken to ensure the confidentiality of information, to share it only with those persons designated by law.

SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD, THE PARENT, AND THE FAMILY

The school can, and does, serve as a focal point for services to children and families. The expertise needed to assess special needs and to design programs to fit those needs already exists within the schools. An example of this response to special needs is programs for handicapped children.

In accordance with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142; 20 USC 1401; 89 Stat. 774), many schools have formed professional review teams to develop individual educational plans

for handicapped children. These teams usually include a psychologist, social worker, speech therapist, reading specialist, and others. Team members are skilled in diagnosing and assessing special problems and in tailoring individual programs to address those problems. Teams routinely work with parents and other educators, call upon support services as indicated, and annually review and revise the plan for each child.

Abused and neglected children, too, are children with special needs. These highly trained professionals, already in the schools and skilled in working with children and parents, can be of great help to the abused and neglected children and their families. Schools may wish to consider setting up a formal structure or program to meet the needs of abused or neglected children. In doing so, however, educators should be extremely careful to protect the rights of the child and family and to avoid labeling these children as abused or neglected.

Support for the Child

Special Services

Abused and neglected children often have special educational, psychological, or medical needs. Schools already provide a number of special services to children who require them. These services, each backed by qualified professionals who administer them, may include:

- diagnosis and assessment of specific problems, including academic, learning, behavior, health, and social adjustment problems
- development of individualized educational plans
- support services including counseling, speech, hearing and language therapy, behavioral management, special education, and health care.

The Regular School Program

The regular school program also offers opportunity to support the abused and neglected child. The negative self-concepts common among these children can be off-set by positive school experiences, a sense of achievement, and accomplishment. The feeling of isolation abused and neglected children frequently experience can be counteracted by providing increased contact with classmates and the chance to make new friends. Warm and sympathetic teachers allow children to see adults in a positive, supportive and caring role.

INFORMATION KEY #9: SPECIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

For this school, the following special services are available for abused or neglected children:

	Title	Name	To Refer Child, Contact	Trained in Child Abuse & Neglect
1.	Psychologist	_____	_____	____ Yes ____ No
2.	Nurse	_____	_____	____ Yes ____ No
3.	Speech Therapist	_____	_____	____ Yes ____ No
4.	Reading Therapist	_____	_____	____ Yes ____ No
5.	Social Worker	_____	_____	____ Yes ____ No
6.	_____	_____	_____	____ Yes ____ No
7.	_____	_____	_____	____ Yes ____ No
8.	_____	_____	_____	____ Yes ____ No
9.	_____	_____	_____	____ Yes ____ No
10.	_____	_____	_____	____ Yes ____ No

If specialists are not available, how can needed services be provided to abused or neglected children? _____

_____

_____

If specialists are not trained in child abuse and neglect, what resources exist for this training? _____

_____

_____

Support for the Parents

School Programs for Parents

Parents involved in child abuse and neglect are frequently lonely, isolated, and experiencing periods of great personal and/or family stress. Many schools already provide programs and services which can directly benefit these parents. These programs include:

- Parent education programs--emphasizing the unique skills of parenting and assisting parents to understand that parenting skills are learned, not instinctive

- Early childhood programs--emphasizing the process of child development, describing realistic levels of expectation and assisting parents in enhancing their own child's development

- Counseling programs--ranging from job skill counseling and programs in alcoholism or drug abuse to assisting parents in the use of alternatives to physical punishment as a form of discipline

- Adult education programs--including high school completion, high school equivalency, occupational training and leisure time activities and recreation programs.

Programs like these need to be expanded and replicated to effectively include parents of abused and neglected children. Such programs offer direct help to parents, but they also provide the opportunity for socialization, the chance to make new friends and pursue new interests. Both are vitally important if the pattern of isolation common among abusive and neglectful parents is to be broken.

Parent Involvement in Planning

Parents can also be directly involved in planning for their children. Teams which serve handicapped children are already working with parents to develop individual educational plans. These skills can be transferred to planning programs for abused and neglected children, focused on their needs and involving their parents. When a problem is identified, parents can be brought in to help deal with it. Concrete, targeted suggestions can be made, and cooperative agreements worked out between school and home. The plan is more likely to be successful if the presentation is positive and delivered in terms of what the school is prepared to do to help the parents, and if the parents' recommendations are included.

INFORMATION KEY #10: Support for Parents
1) Parent programs now offered by this school include: _____ _____ _____ 2) To increase the effective use of school resources in assisting abusive or neglecting parents, how can school resources be improved or changed?

Support of the Family

Schools can offer both direct and indirect support to the families of abused and neglected children. None of these services is new. All already exist, and schools have provided them for years. It is merely their application to abused and neglected children which is new.

Financial Support Assistance

Where financial difficulties are present, schools may be able to provide free or reduced-price breakfasts, lunch, field trips and extracurricular activities. For the child who needs them, the school can often arrange for glasses, hearing aids or prosthetic devices to be provided. Many schools maintain an emergency supply of clothing and shoes so that children without them can receive them quickly and quietly.

Home Visits and Child Assistance

In many school districts, pupil personnel workers, social workers or school nurses make home visits to assess family needs and to arrange for needed support services. Others arrange for day care, after school care, or special programs like home tutoring for the chronically ill child.

Use of Facilities

Schools can offer indirect support to families by providing education and assistance to the community at large and by making their extensive facilities available for meetings and for special programs like crisis nurseries. All that is needed is acceptance of the school's critical part in child abuse and neglect and a willingness to be involved in its elimination.

PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

A community approach to child abuse and neglect is most effective because it makes optimal use of the special skills and knowledge of various professionals so that family and community needs are met. Many communities are turning to multidisciplinary child abuse and neglect case consultation teams as a means of assuring integrated planning and service delivery. Case consultation teams usually include representatives from health/mental health, social services, law enforcement, and education agencies. Members bring with them a wide range of backgrounds and a diversity of diagnostic, assessment, and treatment skills. They meet together regularly to assess cases of child abuse and neglect and to recommend treatment programs. Team members are able to commit services from the agencies they represent and together they are able to call upon a broad range of services, resources, skills, and programs to help families at risk.

Child abuse and neglect case consultation teams also frequently serve as a forum for resolving the issues and conflicts that inevitably arise whenever difficult social problems must be addressed by multiple public and private agencies. As they work together, team members come to know, to understand, and to appreciate each other's functions in the management process. Within the team framework, if problems arise, they can be quickly solved. If a particular recommendation has not proven effective, another can be considered. Lines of communication are opened and the entire process works more smoothly.

The team concept is an excellent one, and one with which educators are thoroughly familiar. In fact, in many communities, the school individualized educational planning team can serve as a model for the community-based case consultation teams.

Educators can make additional contributions to the team. They can lend their expertise in the areas of child development; "special children," e.g., hyperative or retarded children; and the educational needs of children, etc.

COMMUNITY COORDINATION

In order to aid community coordination, some communities are establishing child protection committees or task forces. The purpose of a Child Protection Coordinating Committee is to provide an organizational structure in which community agencies and resources that are involved in meeting the needs of children and families can work together to achieve that objective through defining roles and responsibilities, increasing communication and coordination, identifying gaps in services and avoiding duplication of services while increasing the efficient and effective utilization of existing services and resources. Although, in most instances, CPS has the primary responsibility for organizing the committee, the educator is one of many persons from multiple agencies and professional disciplines who must work together to maximize the opportunities for the optimal development of the children within the community. If there is no Child Protection Coordinating Committee within a community, educators may be able to help institute such a coordinating body.

Obstacles to Coordination

There are a number of obstacles to be avoided in order to ensure successful coordination of the committee resulting in effective service delivery.

Turfism

"Turfism" or feelings of territoriality must be prevented among professionals involved in the child abuse and neglect response system in order to coordinate service delivery effectively. Open communications and an understanding of mutual goals among community agencies and professional groups would decrease these attitudes.

Differences in Priorities

Although community agencies and professionals are concerned about the same problem, child abuse, they may approach it from different perspectives which would result in differences in priorities.

To ensure a unified sense of purpose or direction, overall goals of the committee should be decided upon at the outset. Once the goals have been determined, clearly defined objectives should be established and put in writing.

Educators can lend their expertise in this process because of their experience in developing policies and procedures for the educational system.

Differences in Professional Judgment

There are bound to be disagreements about decisions among committee members. Since members are working toward the same end, differences of opinions can be honestly and openly discussed and compromises reached through negotiation. Educators and other committee members can assist in this process by being receptive to opinions and suggestions that differ from their own.

VI

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

While reporting child abuse and neglect and improving services to families is an effective means of preventing child abuse and neglect from recurring, the major thrust of prevention is to stop child abuse and neglect from occurring at all. Schools are in a unique position to address this particular problem through school-based programs, school-community programs, and individual action.

SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

As with programs which are supportive of parents, children and families (see Chapter V), most of the programs which schools may use in preventing child abuse and neglect are not new. These programs include classes in education for parenthood and child development, programs focusing on the development of essential life skills, and programs targeted toward adolescent parents.

Child Development and Education for Parenthood

One approach to preventing child abuse and neglect is to provide education for parenthood programs to all students, from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Some cases of child abuse and neglect have been associated with a lack of knowledge about children's needs and development. By making such information more widely available, it is possible that the incidence of child abuse and neglect can be reduced. Education for parenthood programs stress the skills required of a parent, suggest ways to strengthen family life and address such topics as nutrition, consumer affairs, family planning, discipline and household budgeting. Students come to understand that being a parent is more than a biological act, it requires knowledge, skill, experience, and maturity.

Parent education programs also teach students about the normal growth and development of a child so they better understand what a child can and should do at a particular age. Thus as parents they are far less likely to become angry with a two-year-old who says "NO!" when they understand that every two-year-old does. As parents these students will be less likely to become frustrated over toilet training when they understand how and when it can be most effectively accomplished.

It is important that education for parenthood be mandatory for boys as well as girls. Traditionally such courses have been aimed principally at high school girls. But limiting these courses to such a small population means that the vast majority of future parents receives no training or education whatever for what will prove to be one of the biggest challenges they will face as adults.

Education in Essential Life Skills and Coping Skills

Schools can also offer courses in life skills. Stress plays an important precipitating role in child abuse and neglect. Lack of successful coping skills, a reduced ability to ask for and accept help, and a low level of self-sufficiency have been cited as characteristics common among abusive and neglectful parents. It is possible that by making students more self-sufficient and better able to handle crises, their life skills can be enhanced and their life stresses reduced.

Life skills courses teach students how to cope with crises, the effects of stress, and where to locate community resources when help is needed for specific problems. Life skills courses may include such information as how to complete an application, where to obtain financing for major purchases and what the terms entail, and the legal rights and responsibilities of citizens. The aim is to make the student as self-sufficient as possible.

Help for Families at Risk

Schools can aid in the community effort to prevent child abuse and neglect by recognizing and aiding families at risk. One way of doing this is by extending school hours to include care for children after their regular class hours. This allows extra freedom for working parents or for parents who could just use some relief from their child care responsibilities.

Adolescents at risk present special problems for identification and help, especially because they often prove to be in a troublesome transitional period and thus have more problems with their parents than children in other age groups. Schools should make an effort to identify and serve adolescents and their families so as to alleviate some of the stress of this period. Perhaps setting up recreation programs for adolescents after school hours would be one effective way of helping them and their parents.

Programs for Adolescent Parents and Their Children

Adolescent parents also have need of prevention programs. Schools should specifically address adolescent parents because they are a high risk group for an array of problems; economic difficulties, health problems, housing problems, job instability, and child abuse and neglect. Schools must begin to focus on specific programs to help adolescent parents stay in school while strengthening their family life.

In some school districts, unfortunately, married students and adolescent parents are excluded from regular academic programs and extracurricular activities. This exclusion only heightens the loneliness and isolation many of these adolescents already feel. Schools must develop alternative programs for these students, programs which will allow them access to their friends while providing them the specific help they need to cope with the double demands of school and a family of their own.

Some forward-looking schools provide special programs for the children of adolescent students. Parents and child both attend school, with the child cared for in a special child care center. The parents go to regular classes, but they also spend time in the child care center, observing and caring for all the children there. Such an arrangement offers a unique training ground for parents and an enhanced learning experience for the children.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

School-community partnerships for the welfare of children have existed for years, and the role of child advocate is not a new one for the educator. What is new is that this partnership for the first time is including abused and neglected children. Although implementing new programs and making changes requires effort, it is altogether fitting that the school and community together serve as advocates for these children. Traditionally advocates for special children's programs have been the parents of children in need. For abused and neglected children, someone other than the parent must assume this function. A school-community partnership is the logical choice.

Training and Staff Development Programs

Cooperative efforts between school and community can be an effective means of preventing child abuse and neglect. Training and staff development programs for all who work with children are an

excellent starting point. These programs should stress identification, reporting, treatment and prevention of child abuse and neglect; furnish information of professional roles and responsibilities in case management; and offer opportunities for free and frank discussion of mutual interests and problems among professionals in various disciplines.

Public Awareness Programs

Schools can also participate in public awareness programs through PTA groups and other school-community organizations. By increasing public sensitivity to child abuse and neglect, schools can help to develop a cadre of concerned individuals who will press for needed resources, programs and funding for child abuse and neglect prevention. This is a familiar route to educators. Many special programs for handicapped, learning disabled and other children with special needs began in just this way.

Use of School Facilities and Resources

Schools can offer concrete help to child abuse and neglect prevention efforts by making school facilities available. Meeting space can be provided for self-help groups like Parents Anonymous. Schools can sponsor public forums and workshops on child abuse and neglect, offering school auditoriums or conference rooms for the purpose. School-owned films and books can be loaned to other agencies and organizations for training programs and meetings.

Joint school-community adult education programs can be offered. Such programs might discuss alternative means of discipline, adolescence, or early childhood growth and development. School buildings can be made available for day care, crisis care and after-school care programs operated by social service agencies. School staff can serve as consultants, leaders, or facilitators of these programs. School newsletters can be used to announce them.

In short, the school offers a wealth of resources for child abuse and neglect prevention efforts. All that is needed is the school's willingness to offer them and the community's willingness to accept them.

INDIVIDUAL ACTION

Individual educators also have a role in preventing child abuse and neglect. They may be involved in preventing a recurrence of

child abuse and neglect in a particular family, or they may be involved in broad based community efforts aimed at primary prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Reporting and Support

Educators may be involved in preventing the recurrence of child abuse and neglect in a particular family when they report suspected child abuse and neglect. By filing a report, educators begin the process of help that will ultimately provide protection for the child and assistance to the family. Educators may also provide direct support to both child and family throughout the treatment and rehabilitation phases. Such support may take the form of special services or a warm, supportive school environment for the child. Educators may help parents to locate specific community resources or directly provide supportive services to them.

The Impact of the Educator on the Family

Educators must consider how their own actions effect family functioning. If behavior management is a point of contention between parent and child, an angry note from the school that the child has misbehaved in class may not be productive of anything but increased risk for the child. It may be better to meet with the parent to decide together on techniques of behavior management that can be used at home and in school.

If grades are an issue, a conference to discuss academic performance may be a better choice than sending home a report card with a failing grade.

Whenever possible, the educator should stress the child's positive performance while suggesting ways to improve any negative aspects. Reiterating the child's faults may merely reinforce the child's negative self-image and confirm the parent's view of the child as a disappointment. But underlining the child's good points will increase the child's self-confidence and sense of success. Further, it will indicate to the parent that the child is a worthwhile and capable person, someone to be proud of.

The Issue of Corporal Punishment

The issue of corporal punishment is schools requires careful examination. There is a paradox in discouraging parental use of corporal punishment while permitting educator use of it. One may argue

that it is a matter of degree. But educators too may become angry while punishing a child, and the result may not be discipline, but abuse. Strict control of corporal punishment may be another way to prevent child abuse and neglect.

APPENDIX A

STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO MANUAL ON ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR

STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO MANUAL ON ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR

STANDARD H-1

THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHOULD DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

STANDARD H-2

THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE RIGHTS OF ALL SCHOOL PERSONNEL, STUDENTS, AND FAMILIES ARE RESPECTED AND PROTECTED

STANDARD H-3

THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHOULD PARTICIPATE ON THE STATE CHILD PROTECTION COORDINATING COMMITTEE, AND THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD PARTICIPATE ON THE COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION COORDINATING COUNCIL

STANDARD H-4

THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD OFFER PROGRAMS TO STUDENTS AND ADULTS ON PARENTING AND CHILD REARING

STANDARD H-5

THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY, IN COOPERATION WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, SHOULD ENSURE THE PROVISION OF CHILD CARE SERVICES FOR SCHOOL-AGE PARENTS

STANDARD H-6

THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY, IN COOPERATION WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, SHOULD ENSURE THAT CHILD CARE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AT RISK ARE AVAILABLE

STANDARD H-7

THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY, IN COOPERATION WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAMS TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE ADOLESCENTS AT RISK

STANDARD H-8

ALL SCHOOL PERSONNEL SHOULD KNOW THE INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND THE EFFECT THAT ABUSE AND NEGLECT MAY HAVE ON THE CHILD'S PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOL

STANDARD H-9

THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD PARTICIPATE ON THE COMMUNITY'S MULTI-DISCIPLINARY CASE CONSULTATION TEAM

STANDARD H-10

THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD PROVIDE ANNUAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR ALL SCHOOL PERSONNEL ON IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

STANDARD H-11

THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD CONDUCT ANNUAL EVALUATIONS OF THEIR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT EFFORTS

STANDARD H-12

THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY, IN COOPERATION WITH THE STATE CHILD PROTECTION COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND THE COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION COORDINATING COUNCIL, SHOULD DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT, AND SUPPORT PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

APPENDIX B

OUTLINE OF A MODEL CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

APPENDIX B

Outline Of A Model Child Abuse And Neglect Policy For Schools

Policy	Procedures
STATEMENT OF SCHOOL SYSTEM COMMITMENT TO MALTREATED CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	• Disseminate school board statement. • Define areas of child abuse and neglect. • Recognize parent feelings and rights.
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS THAT REFLECT STATE LAW.	• Publish legal requirements, with immunities and liabilities. • Provide in oral and written form. • Designate reporting responsibility. • Appoint an internal coordinator and outline specific procedural action. • Identify a feedback/follow-up system.
INSERVICE TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.	• Appoint a training team. • Select training materials. • Plan a schedule of inservice events. • Offer education incentives.
DESIGNATION OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL TO COLLABORATE WITH THE COMMUNITY MULTI-DISCIPLINARY CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASE CONSULTATION TEAM.	• Appoint a school representative/liaison on the case consultation team. • Designate school personnel who can be used in advisory capacity. • Specify attendance procedures for case-related personnel.

Policy	Procedures
IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOL/ COMMUNITY RESOURCES AS SUPPORT SERVICES.	• Assess available resources. • Publish a list of service providers and programs with eligibility requirements. • Establish or utilize existing school-based teams for program planning.
PROMOTION OF PRIMARY PREVENTION PROGRAMS.	• Authorize schools to sponsor parent education programs. • Initiate a public awareness effort. • Designate school facilities to be used for family support services. • Develop parent education curriculum at secondary level.

EXAMPLE OF A CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY FOR EDUCATORS*

STUDENTS: Elementary and Secondary

Child Abuse and Neglect

1. Physical Abuse and Sexual Abuse

Under Maryland Law an abused child is any child under the age of eighteen (18) who (a) has sustained physical injury as a result of cruel or inhumane treatment or a malicious act or acts by his parent or any other person responsible for his care or supervision; (b) has been sexually molested or exploited, whether or not he has sustained physical injury, by his parent or any other person responsible for his care or supervision. Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to incest, rape, carnal knowledge, sodomy, or unnatural or perverted sexual practices.

Suspected physical abuse and sexual abuse cases are investigated by the Baltimore County Department of Social Services and the Youth Division of the Baltimore County Police Department. Each case is professionally evaluated to determine the necessity of treatment for the family. Criminal prosecution is not the primary purpose of the investigation or the reports made by the educator.

The law provides immunity from any civil liability or criminal penalty to all who participate, in good faith, in the making of a report in an investigation, in physical and sexual abuse, or in any judicial proceedings resulting from such a report. The procedures below are to be followed in suspected physical abuse and sexual abuse cases only.

a. Reporting Procedure

(1) School staff members and any employee of the Board of Education shall orally report suspected child abuse to the Baltimore County Department of Social Services between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on business days. For reports made outside of business hours, telephone the Baltimore County Police, Youth Division, and request the emergency worker for the Department of Social Services contact you.

(2) In addition to reporting orally to the Department of Social Services school staff members shall also inform the local school principal that a case of suspected

*Provided by the Baltimore County, Maryland Public School System.

child abuse has been reported to the Department of Social Services. The obligation of the principal to report cases of suspected child abuse brought to his/her attention by staff members is not discretionary and the principal shall assure that the case is duly reported if this has not already been done.

(3) The person making the oral report to the Department of Social Services is also responsible for submitting a written report. (See form Suspected Child Abuse Referral attached.) The written report must follow the oral report and be made within forty-eight (48) hours of the contact which disclosed the existence of possible abuse.

Copies of the written report shall be sent to:

Protective Services
Department of Social Services
Investment Building
620 York Road
Towson, Md. 21204

Youth Division of the
Baltimore County Police
Department
400 Kenilworth Drive
Towson, Md. 21204

State's Attorney for Baltimore County
Court House
Towson, Md. 21204

and to the Carver Office of Pupil Personnel and the assigned pupil personnel worker. Forms are available in each school office.

b. School Procedure

(1) School staff members may initially question the child to determine if the child's injuries resulted from cruel or inhumane treatment, sexual abuse or malicious acts by the child's caretaker. However, in no case should the child be subjected to undue pressure in order to validate the suspicion of abuse. Validation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Department of Social Services, assisted by the police. Any doubt about reporting a suspected situation is to be resolved in favor of the child and the report made immediately.

(2) The principal, or his designee, will have the responsibility of notifying the pupil's parents and/or guardian that an incident of child abuse has been

reported to the Department of Social Services or the Youth Division of the Baltimore County Police Department. An exception to this rule may be made in a case where in the judgment of the principal, after consultation with the Director of Pupil Services, such a disclosure to the parents would create a threat to the well being of the child. In these cases the principal and Director of Pupil Services would jointly determine a follow-up procedure which would insure intervention by an appropriate social agency.

(3) In suspected cases of physical and sexual abuse, the suspect victim may be questioned by the police or social worker at the school without the principal obtaining permission of the victim's parent or guardian.

(4) Consultation service to school staff members is available from the Department of Social Services between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

2. Child Neglect

School staff members who have reason to believe a child is suffering from neglect, may make referrals to any school administrator or counselor for team review. Initially, suspected child neglect cases are evaluated by the appropriate school personnel in team or case conferences. The various members of the school multidisciplinary team utilize their skills in assessing the problem and establishing a positive program of action. The pupil personnel worker has the primary responsibility for visiting the home and evaluating the family conditions. A neglected child may be one of the following:

"a. Malnourished; ill-clad, dirty; without proper shelter or sleeping arrangements; lacking appropriate health care

b. Unattended; without adequate supervision

c. Ill and lacking essential medical care

d. Denied normal experiences that produce feelings of being loved, wanted, secure (Emotional neglect)

e. Unlawfully kept from attending school

f. Exploited; overworked

g. Emotionally disturbed due to continuous friction in the home, marital discord, mentally ill parents

h. Exposed to unwholesome and demoralizing circumstances"*

The families may require assistance in many areas and a variety of different treatment strategies. The pupil personnel worker will assist the family in obtaining the appropriate help needed within the school situation or community.

In severe cases of child neglect or when efforts have been unsuccessful in working towards constructive changes within the family, the pupil personnel worker will refer the case to the Department of Social Services. The pupil personnel worker will also have the responsibility of informing the parents of this action. A written summary outlining the specific conditions of the family situation shall be forwarded to the Baltimore County Department of Social Services.

A referral to the specialized service such as the Department of Social Services may be indicated. However, a well coordinated multi-disciplined approach that stresses interagency cooperation among school, Social Services and other pertinent community agencies must be emphasized. A constructive program of services will result from the coordinated efforts of social and educational representatives.

The Baltimore County Department of Social Services has the legal responsibility for evaluating reports of suspected child neglect and for taking legal action to protect a child where necessary. Under the Annotated Code of Maryland any educator who acts upon reasonable grounds in the making of any report required by law, rule, or regulation or who participated in judicial proceedings which result from such report shall be immune from any civil liability which occurs.

*Maryland State Department of Social Services Goal and Guides, 1972.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REFERRAL

TO: Baltimore County Department of Social Services
Youth Division of Baltimore County Police Department

FROM: (Name of School and Individual making report)

_____

_____

NAME OF CHILD _____

ADDRESS OF CHILD _____

PRESENT WHEREABOUTS OF CHILD _____

_____

AGE OF CHILD _____

BIRTHDATE OF CHILD _____

NAME OF PARENT/ADULT RESPONSIBLE FOR CARE OF CHILD

_____

PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

RELATIONSHIP _____

NATURE AND DESCRIPTION OF INJURY*

Include description of circumstances and any evidence and/or information available pertaining to present or previous injuries and "all such information available to the reporter which would be of aid in establishing the cause of the injuries or injury and identity of the person or persons responsible therefor."

Signature of person making report:	Date of Oral Report	Date of Written Report	To Whom Reported
_____			

Check List

Baltimore County Department of Social Services	_____
Youth Division of Baltimore County Police Dept.	_____
Baltimore County States' Attorney Office	_____
School Office	_____
Office of Pupil Personnel	_____
Pupil Personnel Worker	_____

*Article 27, Section 35A, subsection (d) Form and Contents of Report

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